

HOUSE RESOLUTION 449

By McCormick

A RESOLUTION to recognize Tom Griscom of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of industry; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Tom Griscom, the publisher and executive editor of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, is one such individual, who has dedicated much of his career to the communications profession and has recently announced that he will be taking a much deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, a 1971 graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, Tom Griscom began his professional career as a reporter with the *Chattanooga Free Press*, honing his communications skills in Hamilton County until 1978, when he accepted the position of press secretary for U.S. Senator Howard Baker; and

WHEREAS, quickly proving himself to be an invaluable aide to Senator Baker, Mr. Griscom's responsibilities expanded into legislative strategy and office management, which led to his selection in 1985 to serve as executive director of the National Republican Senatorial Committee for the 1986 election cycle; and

WHEREAS, joining the private sector in 1987, Tom Griscom served in a senior management role for Ogilvy and Mather, a public affairs firm in Washington, D.C., before returning to government service later that year when he was named an Assistant to the President as the White House communication director under President Ronald Reagan; and

WHEREAS, in his capacity as White House communication director, Mr. Griscom oversaw speechwriting, scheduling, advance teams, media relations, public affairs and public

liaison, and the press secretary's office; he directed the staff transition and coordinated two U.S. – Soviet Union summits; and

WHEREAS, it was also during his time at the White House that Mr. Griscom was summoned to the office of White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker to meet with Secretary of State George Schultz who objected to the speech prepared for President Reagan to be delivered in Berlin; and

WHEREAS, Tom Griscom informed Secretary Schultz that the now famous line in question, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall," had been commented on by President Reagan who was comfortable with it; as Mr. Griscom told Secretary Schultz at the time, "...I can promise you that this line will reverberate"; and

WHEREAS, returning to Tennessee in 1988, Tom Griscom became the first person to hold the West Chair of Communication at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and designed the focus of the chair and its integration across multi-disciplines; in addition to teaching classes at his alma mater, he organized public policy forums for the students and the community; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, Mr. Griscom accepted a position with R.J. Reynolds where he served as an executive vice president responsible for public relations, public affairs, and state and federal government relations, overseeing a staff of 130 with an annual budget in excess of \$30 million; and

WHEREAS, after a short tenure with News Corporation as an executive vice president and a period with Powell Tate as a senior advisor on client public affairs, Tom Griscom returned to the newsprint industry in 1999 when he was named publisher and executive editor of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*; and

WHEREAS, Tom Griscom oversaw the expansion of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*' coverage into a twelve-county region, multi-state region as well as the development of new sections that focused on entertainment, sports, and young readers, receiving national recognition from the distinguished *Editor & Publisher*; and

WHEREAS, the 2007 UTC Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient and actively involved in his community, Mr. Griscom has served ably on numerous boards, including the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce, Allied Arts, The Community Resource Council, Chattanooga

Neighborhood Enterprises, the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, University of Tennessee Development Council, Howard Baker Center of Public Policy, Tennessee Open Government Coalition, president of the Tennessee Press Association, and the University of Chattanooga Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Tom Griscom exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean and enjoys the love and support of his wife, Marion, and their three children, "T," Patti, and Will; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Tom Griscom has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues, his employees, and the good people of Chattanooga; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we commend Tom Griscom on his extraordinary career and tenure as the publisher and executive editor of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* and extend to him our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.